

may be merit in the proposals of my distinguished friend from Illinois, but this amendment should be thoughtfully considered and evaluated, not presented as an amendment to this piece of legislation without proper reflection.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose the amendment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "BOXING SAFETY, RETIREMENT, AND RE-TRAINING ACT OF 1995"

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 14, 1995

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Boxing Safety, Retirement, and Re-training Act of 1995. This bill would create a Government corporation that would oversee the boxing industry, ensure that healthy working conditions exist, and eliminate the widespread corruption and exploitation that runs rampant within the sport. The bill places special emphasis on assuring the health and safety of boxers.

Boxers are never privileged individuals. They primarily are minorities from disadvantaged areas, easily susceptible to the unscrupulous business practices of boxing promoters. Traditionally, minority youth have viewed a boxing career as a way to leave behind a life of poverty and gain wealth and stability for themselves and their families.

Often these men have no other hope. They are poorly educated and face an inhospitable job market. Boxing promoters exploit the dreams of young boxers by promising lucrative careers. Once boxers enter the business, they surrender all control over their careers. They are used like property for the financial gain of others.

The industry is controlled by a few organizations, manipulated like puppets by a small number of immensely powerful promoters. In this equation, the boxer is powerless. He must play by their rules or not play at all. If he complains, he is not allowed to fight. If he speaks publicly about negative conditions, he faces banishment and an end to his financial support. If he wants to fight in title matches, he must sign contracts rife with clauses that direct money to the promoter's family and friends. This situation becomes especially problematic when the boxer has little education, might not speak English, and has no other financial resources.

The boxing industry might say that it is being unfairly singled out because the Government does not directly regulate any other professional sport. But the reason we do not directly regulate other sports is because we do not need to; they have proven over time that they can manage their own affairs. Through players' unions, most professional athletes have recourse against unfavorable working conditions. Golfers, bowlers, and baseball, football, and basketball players, all have an avenue that prevents them from being exploited. Boxers have none.

This bill is not the first attempt by Congress to get involved in an industry that cannot monitor itself. When working conditions became intolerable, the Federal Government stepped in and formed the Occupational Safety and

Health Administration [OSHA]. When financial transactions became suspect, the Securities and Exchange Commission [SEC] was created. When some States proved to be irresponsible on civil rights issues, the Federal Government initiated the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The boxing industry has had over 100 years to get its act together, and it has failed. It is time for Congress to get involved.

Only a handful of States conduct oversight over boxing, and only a few of those do it effectively. Too often, State agencies have been co-opted by those with a financial interest in the sport. My bill would create an unbiased board whose members would be unable to reap monetary reward from the industry while serving. The board would be comprised of neurological specialists, average citizens, and a representative from the boxing world. The board's members would be given the responsibility of establishing minimum standards to which States must adhere. States with effective agencies would be able to maintain autonomy, but states with little or no oversight would be forced to improve.

Without this bill, the unconscionable practices of this sport will continue. Oversight responsibility will continue to be left to those individuals who have proven that greed is their motivating force. Unsuspecting minority youth will still be exploited. Boxers will never be able to voice objections to working conditions. And an elite group of promoters will keep becoming very, very rich.

I am in no way asking for a ban of the sport, just some oversight. Amateur boxing programs in neighborhoods have been successful in getting young people off the street and giving them confidence. It is the professional arena where the problems lie. For the sake of the young men involved and fostering the integrity of the sport, I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation.

OBSERVING THE FIFTH ANNUAL DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD

HON. FLOYD H. FLAKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 14, 1995

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to support the observance of the African Child on June 16, 1995.

I come to you today with this request simply because it only seems suitable, coming from a country that invests in human capital, that each and every Member should be able to look within their hearts and realize that the African, specifically the South African, child has been traumatized over the course of apartheid and the demoralization of Africa as a whole.

The Day of the African Child commemorates the June 16, 1976 massacre of school children in Soweto, South Africa. Since the original designation by the Organization of African Unity in 1991, it has become an event that has mobilized communities around the world to look at the situation of all African children and to celebrate the diverse cultures and traditions of the large continent.

The theme of this years Day of the African Child will deal with children in armed conflict. Amazingly enough, a study showed that 75 percent of the children in Rwanda has seen mass killings. In several African countries,

boys as young as 11 years old have been recruited into military training. It is quite obvious that the future of these children is very bleak, that is without proper intervention.

Moreover, since we always only focus on the hardships of Africa, this day is a time to also look at the accomplishments of the continent. For not every child in Africa suffers from disease and malnutrition, or is impoverished or illiterate.

I thank all of my colleagues for their attention to this important matter and I hope that each and everyone of you will participate in this observation.

It is up to us to let these children know that their struggles were not in vain.

A TRIBUTE TO SOUTH GLENS FALLS CENTRAL SCHOOL VOLUNTEER/MENTOR PROGRAM

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 14, 1995

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today and pay tribute to a program which provides a tremendous service to the students and community of South Glens Falls. The Volunteer/Mentor program is completing its 2nd year of service helping elementary and middle school children with their self-esteem, allowing them to meet their academic and personal potential.

Young people comprise America's greatest asset. In that respect, a program like this one is invaluable and representative of that uniquely American concept of volunteerism. In this day and age especially, our children are subject to an alarming range of negative influences. Therefore, it is critical that we call upon the entire community to assist our young people in overcoming problems with their self-esteem by countering the impact of damaging social ills. That is why the service of the 60 volunteers in this program is so critical.

Allow me to recount some of the efforts of these mentors. They meet with the students in small, or even one to one settings for at least 45 minutes per week. This relationship between mentor and child lasts for a minimum of one school year, whereby affected children receive the degree of attention they need to ensure they reach their maximum potential. These volunteers and the children often establish such strong bonds that many mentors have extended their service for a 2nd year.

This type of devotion exemplifies those qualities which make Americans, and America, great. I have always felt that there are three distinct reasons for this greatness, American pride, patriotism and volunteerism. The American people have been noted for this voluntary service, be it in the fire departments, civic and community organizations or extracurricular programs at our schools.

Mr. Speaker, the United States of America is the longest continuing democracy in the world and a model for emerging countries. In that same mold, people like those who comprise the Volunteer/Mentor program in the South Glens Falls Central School District are models for all of us here. To that end, I have always been one to judge people based on what they return to their community. By that measure, these volunteers are truly great